

VZCZCXYZ0002
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHIL #0297/01 0411126
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
O 101126Z FEB 09
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1411
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK IMMEDIATE 8989
RUEHNO/USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE 4874
RHEHAAA/THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL//CCPA// IMMEDIATE
RHMFIUU/HQ PACAF HICKAM AFB HI//CCPA// IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 9632
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 6957
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 0946
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI

UNCLAS ISLAMABAD 000297

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A
TAGS: [KMDR](#) [KPAO](#) [OIIP](#) [OPRC](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PK](#)
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN MEDIA REACTION: FEBRUARY 10, 2009

Summary: Reports on the U.S. Special Envoy Holbrooke's "exploratory trip" to Islamabad received front-page coverage in all newspapers today. All newspapers quoted him as saying that he is here "to listen and learn the ground realities of this critically important country." At the same time, all newspapers highlighted report that the Defense Committee of the Federal Cabinet described the Delhi's dossier (on Mumbai attacks) as "insufficient", and called on India to provide "substantial evidence" to reach a logical conclusion. Several major dailies reported that the U.S. Ambassador Patterson met Pakistani officials to "express U.S. concern" over the Pakistani High Court ruling that declared Dr. Khan a free citizen. Likewise, reports on the government's decision to "impose new curbs on Dr. Khan after the U.S and Britain expressed serious concern over his release" were also received prominent display.

Today most major dailies ran editorials on the pros and cons of Mr. Holbrooke's current visit to Pakistan, and any possible change in the U.S. approach on Afghanistan and Pakistan. The prestigious English language daily, "Dawn," observed that "Mr. Holbrooke's task will be to ensure Pakistan's cooperation while trying to assure it that the days of a 'transactional' relationship between the U.S. and Pakistan are firmly in the past." Whereas, the second largest Urdu language daily, "Nawa-i-Waqt," connoted that the "war continuation in Afghanistan might prove President Obama as the Gorbachev of the U.S. as the country faces worst economic crisis due to the war." The mass circulation Urdu daily, "Jang," while terming the Mr. Holbrooke's visit as crucial opined that "he will be able to comprehend the Pakistan's point of view more clearly, and will definitely put forward viable proposals to the U.S. Administration consistent with the ground realities." End Summary.

News Stories

"Holbrooke Arrives On 'Exploratory Trip'" "Dawn" (02/10)

"U.S. Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan Ambassador Richard Holbrooke arrived in Islamabad on Monday on an 'orientation and exploratory trip' ahead of a policy review for the region by the Obama administration. 'As President Obama's and Secretary of State Clinton's Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan, I am here to listen and learn the ground realities of this critically important country,' Ambassador Holbrooke said on arrival."

"Pak-Afghan Bad Blood Behind Holbrooke's Appointment" "Dawn"
(02/10)

"U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton opted for a special envoy for Afghanistan and Pakistan after having witnessed the bad blood between the countries' leaders, she said in an interview with the New York Times, released on Monday."

"Ball Back In Delhi's Court" "Dawn" (02/10)

"Pakistan has described the information provided by India on the Mumbai attacks as 'insufficient' to reach a logical conclusion and bring the alleged perpetrators to justice. Reviewing a report prepared by the Federal Investigation Agency, the Defense Committee of the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani decided on Monday that Pakistan would also send a dossier to India with several questions required for investigation into the case."

"Pakistan To Register Case In Mumbai Attacks" "The News" (02/10)

"Pakistan has made it clear that without substantial evidence from India it will be exceedingly difficult to complete the investigation into the Mumbai attacks and proceed with the case, said an official statement released after the meeting of the Defense Committee of the Cabinet (DCC) chaired by Prime Minister Yousaf Raza Gilani on Monday."

"FBI Woman Accused Of Sexually Harassing Indian Terror Suspect" "Dawn" (02/10)

"An Indian suspect being probed in the wider conspiracy to stage the November terrorist attacks in Mumbai has accused a woman officer of the FBI of sexually abusing him during his interrogation, Indian news reports said on Monday."

"U.S. Seeks Solid Assurances Over A.Q. Khan" "The News" (02/10)

"The United States has sought 'solid' assurances from Pakistan it will take steps to prevent freed nuclear scientist A.Q. Khan from nuclear proliferation in the future, a senior U.S. official said on Monday. U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan Anne Patterson met Pakistani government officials on Sunday to express U.S. concern over the Pakistani High Court ruling on Friday that declared Khan a free citizen, said a senior State Department official."

"Patterson Rejects Gillani's Concern At Drone Attacks" "The Post" (02/10)

"U.S. Ambassador in Pakistan Anne W. Patterson called on Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani in Islamabad at Prime Minister House on Monday. Both the leaders discussed the issues pertaining to the progress made in connection with the investigation of Mumbai attacks, law and order situation and peace in the region and strengthening of bilateral relations between the two countries. U.S. envoy has rejected the PM's concern regarding drone attacks in tribal areas and took the stance that U.S. administration had the right to take action against militants in any part of the world to free the world from terrorism; which necessitated drone attacks, until it deemed necessary, and the new U.S. Administration had already conveyed its stance to Pakistan."

"Govt. Imposes New Curbs On Dr. Khan" "Dawn" (02/10)

"The government is reported to have stopped nuclear scientist Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan from meeting people after the United States and Britain expressed serious concern over his release on a court order."

"Dr. Khan Remains Potential Risk: U.S." "Dawn" (02/10)

"The United States warned Pakistan on Monday that it believed Dr. A.Q. Khan could indulge in further proliferation activities and said it would remain engaged with Islamabad over the decision to release the nuclear scientist, State Department's deputy spokesman Robert Wood said at a regular briefing in Washington."

"Movement Of Dr. Khan Restricted, U.S. Assured" "Dawn" (02/10)

"President Asif Ali Zardari has assured the United States that the movement of scientist Abdul Qadeer Khan was still restricted, the New York Times said quoting a Pakistan government official. Mr. Khan would be barred from foreign travel and from making financial

transactions, the official told the Times."

"Musharraf Sees Pressure After Dr. Khan's Release" "Daily Times" (02/10)

"Former president Pervez Musharraf on Monday warned that international pressure on Pakistan would increase after the release of nuclear scientist Dr. Abdul Qadeer Khan, a private TV channel reported."

"U.K. Appoints Special Envoy For Pakistan, Afghanistan" "Dawn" (02/10)

"Britain appointed its own Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan and named Sir Sherard Cowper-Coles, currently its Ambassador to Afghanistan, for the post on the day U.S. President Obama's Special Representative for the two countries arrived in Islamabad."

"Tarin Wants U.S. Aid Free Of Conditions" "The News" (02/10)

"Pakistan has asked the Obama administration not to attach stringent conditions with proposed Kerry-Lugar bill for providing \$15 billion non-military aid over the next 10 years, saying that the conditionalities would not serve any purpose to help out Pakistan in this difficult hour of the need, Advisor to Prime Minister on Finance Shaukat Tarin said while talking to reporters in Islamabad on Monday."

"Kayani To Visit U.S. This Month" "Dawn" (02/10)

"Chief of Army Staff Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani is coming to the United States later this month amid a major review of the U.S. strategy towards Afghanistan and Pakistan.... Gen. Kayani arrives on February 22 on a week-long trip on the invitation of Gen. George W. Casey, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army."

"ISI Briefs Foreign Military Advisors" "Daily Times" (02/10)

"Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) officials on Monday gave a rare briefing to military advisers and attaches of foreign missions based in Islamabad, a private TV channel reported. The briefing covered the prevailing security situation and the war on terror, with evidence being provided of foreign interference in subversive activities in NWFP and Balochistan."

"U.S. Choppers, Drones Violate Pakistan Airspace" "The News" (02/10)

"The U.S. gunship choppers violated Pakistan airspace thrice within 14 hours and were seen flying over the area for 15 minutes on Monday, while dozens of head of cattle were killed when mortar shells fired from across the border fell in the border villages of North Waziristan Agency."

"Suicide Attack On Police Post Near Bannu; 18 Injured" "Dawn" (02/10)

"A suicide bomber rammed his explosives-laden pick-up into a police checkpoint on the Baran Pul in Miramshah, five kilometers from Bannu on Monday. Eighteen security personnel were injured in the blast."

"11 Children Among 26 Killed In Darra Shelling" "The News" (02/10)

"A soldier and 25 persons, including 11 children, were killed while 38 others sustained injuries when mortar shells hit some houses during ongoing clashes between security forces and militants in Qasimkhel area of Darra Adamkhel on Monday."

"6 Militants Killed In Bajaur Bombing" "The News" (02/10)

"Amid an indefinite curfew clamped by the political administration, the security forces continued pounding suspected hideouts of Taliban fighters, killing six more alleged militants and injuring several others, including women, in different parts of the restive Bajaur tribal region on Monday."

"Five Militants Among 9 Die In Swat" "The News" (02/10)

"Nine people - five of them militants - were killed and 11 others, including six soldiers, injured in artillery shelling and incidents of violence in military-infested Swat Valley on Monday."

"Taliban Torch Boys' School In Swat" "Daily Times" (02/10)

"Suspected Taliban torched a boys' school and a Basic Health Unit (BHU) in Matta tehsil of Swat on Monday. Following the torching of this school, the total number of destroyed schools in Swat has reached 190, of which 122 are boys' schools and 68 are girls'."

Editorials/Op-eds

"Special Envoy's Agenda," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (02/10)

"Mr. Holbrooke is no shrinking violet but Pakistan surely is a unique challenge. To understand the Americans' approach to Pakistan we must begin with flagging up their interests in Afghanistan.... FATA has become a hub of militancy from where attacks are planned and launched into Afghanistan, giving rise to two American demands: eliminate the sanctuaries in FATA and crack down on cross-border movement of militants. Second, Pakistan is a critical supply corridor for international troops in Afghanistan.... From this security-conscious outlook, Mr. Holbrooke's task will be to ensure Pakistan's cooperation while trying to assure it that the days of a 'transactional' relationship between the U.S. and Pakistan are firmly in the past."

"Afghan War: Mr. Holbrooke, Victory Is Not Difficult, It Is Impossible," an editorial in the second-largest, center-right nationalist Urdu daily "Nawa-i-Waqt" (cir. 125,000) (02/10)

"U.S. special representatives on Pakistan and Afghanistan Richard Holbrooke warned allies of grave difficulties in the way to success in the war in Afghanistan.... According to a Newsweek report, America knows about the ineffectiveness of Karzai and the fact that it is losing the war. This is why the administration is getting directly in touch with governors in Afghanistan.... The war continuation in Afghanistan might prove President Obama as the Gorbachev of America as the country faces worst economic crisis due to the war.... Isn't it better for America to learn from its mistakes and expand the 'slogan of change' to Pakistan and Afghanistan? This is in the U.S. interest."

"Acknowledgment Of Failure Of U.S. Policy On Afghanistan," an editorial in the leading mass circulation centrist Urdu daily "Jang" (cir. 300,000) (02/10)

"U.S. Special Envoy Richard Holbrooke has attested the U.S. failure in Afghanistan as saying that fighting the insurgency in Afghanistan could prove tougher than in Iraq. The Obama Administration must understand his stand and change its policies accordingly. Mr. Holbrooke's visit to Pakistan is very crucial as he will be able to comprehend the Pakistan's point of view more clearly, and will definitely put forward viable proposals to the U.S. Administration consistent with the ground realities. Now as the U.S. policy makers have realized the failure of their policy on Afghanistan, they must change their strategy and adopt a positive approach to get resolve this issue immediately."

"Appeal To Richard Holbrooke," an editorial note in the popular rightist Urdu-language daily "Ausaf" (cir. 10,000) (02/10)

"If the people of the U.S. and the European countries become sad and distressed over killing of a dog crushed beneath a car, why do they keep mum over the terrible state terrorism against the Kashmiri people in Indian held Kashmir? It is a hard reality that the Kashmir issue has made hostage the peace and harmony in South Asia, and both Pakistan and India have been undergoing through a sort of cold war for the last several decades. If the U.S. wants to see this part of the world peaceful and serene, free from hatred and hostilities, it will have to help resolve Kashmir issue, and develop congenial ties with Afghan people."

"Obama Aide Richard Holbrooke's Views," an editorial in the center-right Urdu daily "Pakistan" (cir. 10,000) (02/10)

"We submit that if you [Richard Holbrooke] have concluded that Bush policies did not lead to anything positive then prudence demands holding of political dialogue for peace. Moreover, Mr. Holbrooke admitted that terrorism in the region can't be uprooted without resolving the Kashmir dispute.... In order to create conducive atmosphere for peace talks it is imperative to halt bombing at Pakistan tribal areas."

"U.S. Officials' Concern Over Afghanistan And The Kashmir Issue," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Din" (circ. 5000) (02/10)

"During U.S. Envoy's visit to Pakistan, the issue that needs to be raised is that the difficult Afghan war can be won only through strengthening Pakistan, not weakening it - and for that it is necessary to stop India from becoming a regional cop. A major portion of Pakistan's defense and diplomatic efforts are linked with Kashmir. Dreams of peace in South Asia and victory in Afghanistan cannot be fulfilled by neglecting Kashmir."

"Richard Holbrooke's Stance On Kashmir, Afghanistan," an editorial in liberal Urdu daily "Express" (cir.25, 000) (02/10)

"Mr. Holbrooke has also emphasized on the need to resolve the Kashmir issue for peace in the region. Earlier on, President Obama had repeatedly mentioned the importance of resolving the Kashmir issue. These [acts] demonstrate his interest in the matter... It is hoped that Mr. Holbrooke, as the President's Special Representative, would use all his energies and skills in trying to resolve this issues. It is not very farfetched to think that these issues would be resolved peacefully during his [President's Obama's] tenure."

"Afghanistan And The Kashmir Issue: U.S. Officials' Latest Views," an editorial in the Lahore-based populist center-right Urdu daily "Khabrain" (cir. 50,000) (02/10)

"The U.S. needs to stop aggression in Afghanistan and bring India towards the negotiating table on Kashmir issue, because as American officials themselves are admitting, the region will be cleansed of unrest and terrorism only if the Kashmir issue is resolved."

"Holbrooke Lands In Troubled Waters," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (02/10)

"He (Mr. Holbrooke) did a good job in Bosnia but the Balkans, despite Serb savagery, were still much easier than this part of the world where at least two states are armed with nuclear weapons and that fact reduces the ability of external actors, even one as powerful as the United States, to influence their behavior."

"Need To Change Policy To Combat Terrorism," an editorial in the Lahore-based independent Urdu daily "Waqt" (circ. 5000) (02/10)

"In the current scenario, it is important for the Pakistani leadership not to be complacent that Pakistan is not being declared a terrorist state or that the world is supporting us, and has not succumbed to anti-Pakistan propaganda. They also need to look into how best to deal with those who want to term Pakistan a failed state and want to damage Pakistan's solidarity and are tightening the noose at every level. It is hoped that the new U.S. President will change all such policies due to which the world has been devastated."

"A New Approach," an editorial in the center-right national English daily "The Nation" (cir. 20,000) (02/10)

"As it undertakes a policy review the Obama Administration needs to realize the futility of the policy of reliance on military means alone to end insurgency in Afghanistan, and its fallout on Pakistan.... There is a need under the circumstances to stop the drone attacks which have caused widespread resentment. To stabilize the tribal areas, large-scale economic development should be undertaken.... The Obama Administration has won elections on the

promises of peace in Iraq. It must not get bogged down in Afghanistan now."

"Beyond Borders," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/10)

"Addressing the 45th Security Conference at Munich, Shah Mehmood Qureshi stressed that only an approach worked out collectively between nations in the South Asian region could successfully overcome militancy.... Greater security and harmony in South Asia would benefit the poverty-stricken people who live here. And an improvement in their plight would eventually serve as the most potent weapon to use against the militancy that remains the biggest threat to stability and safety in the region."

"Pakistan's Loss," an editorial in the Karachi-based center-right sensationalist Urdu daily "Ummat" (cir. 33,000) (02/10)

"Pakistan Foreign Minister Qureshi while addressing at the Security Conference in Munich has held that his country incurred loss worth 35 billion dollars owing to the ongoing war on terror. Last year, more or less two thousand Pakistanis lost their lives in approximately 600 terrorist attacks. We believe that whenever the U.S. and its allies criticize the Pakistan's performance in the global war on terror, they must consider these facts, indeed, Pakistan has suffered enormous losses while playing pivotal role in this drive."

"The Holbrooke Mission," an op-ed by Shahid Javed Burki in the Karachi-based center-left independent national English daily "Dawn" (cir. 55,000) (02/10)

"Richard Holbrooke begins his mission to Afghanistan and Pakistan at a particularly difficult time for the two countries.... At this time Pakistan is faced with a perfect storm: its political system and the structure of its economy are in tatters. Both need to be fixed.... How could Holbrooke help the country make progress in developing a system of governance that is durable and meets the wishes of the people? He could possibly play the role of an intermediary for different political groups. However, it is in economics that the United States could be really helpful."

"American General Admits," an editorial in the Karachi-based right-wing pro-Jamaat-e-Islami Urdu daily "Jasarat" (cir. 3,000) (02/10)

"U.S. General David Petraeus has admitted that Afghanistan has become a burial ground for foreign forces. It is surprising that despite realizing this truth, why does the U.S. Administration still consider sending additional 30,000 troops to Afghanistan? Perhaps, they (Americans) have refused to learn lesson from the history, and continue to inflict destruction on Afghan people."

"Pakistan Cannot Afford Such Incidents," an editorial in the Lahore-based liberal English language daily "Daily Times" (cir. 10,000) (02/10)

"The engineer (Piotr Stanczak, a Polish Geologist) was abducted from a settled area bordering NWFP and shows the reach of terrorist groups. We also do not know what efforts the government mounted to get him released but it does not seem that Islamabad was losing too much sleep over the incident. This plays right into the hands of elements who want Pakistan isolated economically, socially and diplomatically. Their savagery is indicative of their strategy. Unlike Pakistan, which needs to assure the world that it is a safe place, the Taliban have no PR campaign to run. For them acts such as this is a plus factor in terms of what they need to signal to the world."

"Barbarians Rule?," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/10)

"The threat to other foreign nationals must have sent a chill through every foreign embassy and consulate in the country. It will have sent fear into the hearts and heads of those who come from far-off lands as volunteer doctors, nurses, teachers and engineers and is a powerful advertisement for just how heedless of normative values - and powerful - these Taliban groups have become. They are

beyond the law or the writ of the state and now murder at will our guests, our friends and supporters, and unless stopped in their tracks, and soon, will establish their own writ across this scarred and mangled land.... The point, and we are perilously close to it, at which it may be said that the extremists have won. We are not at that point yet, but it is going to take decisive action to ensure we never reach it."

"Terrorist Targets," an editorial in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/10)

"The destruction of life in that (Swat) valley has been swift and the assault came unexpectedly. The same sequence of events can be replicated in other places. The most recent attack has shown the terrorists are capable of striking in Punjab too.... For these reasons we need a holistic, carefully planned policy to defeat them. There is no alternative.... Otherwise the dangers we face will grow and the demoralization within security forces will increase, further impeding the ability to tackle terrorism."

"The Remaking Of America," an op-ed by Roedad Khan in the centrist national English daily "The News" (cir. 55,000) (02/10)

"If you want to know what happens to an ill-led and ill-governed small country which attaches itself to a powerful country like the United States, visit Pakistan. Nuclear Pakistan has lost its independence. It is now virtually an American satellite and is portrayed in American media as a 'retriever dog.' Pakistan lost its manhood, its honor, its dignity, and its sense of self-respect during the presidency of George W. Bush.... The decision to send additional troops to Afghanistan is simply an extension of the failed policy of George W. Bush. Beefing up the American occupation in Afghanistan is not the solution. It is part of the problem. The presence of foreign troops on their soil is perceived by Afghans as deeply humiliating, a constant reminder of the loss of everything they cherish, everything they hold dear: Freedom, sovereignty, liberties, honor and national pride. They will never accept foreign occupation of their country. The least America can do in its own national interest is to follow the first rule of holes and stop digging."

Patterson